

State Senator **Bill Alter**

Capitol Report

2006

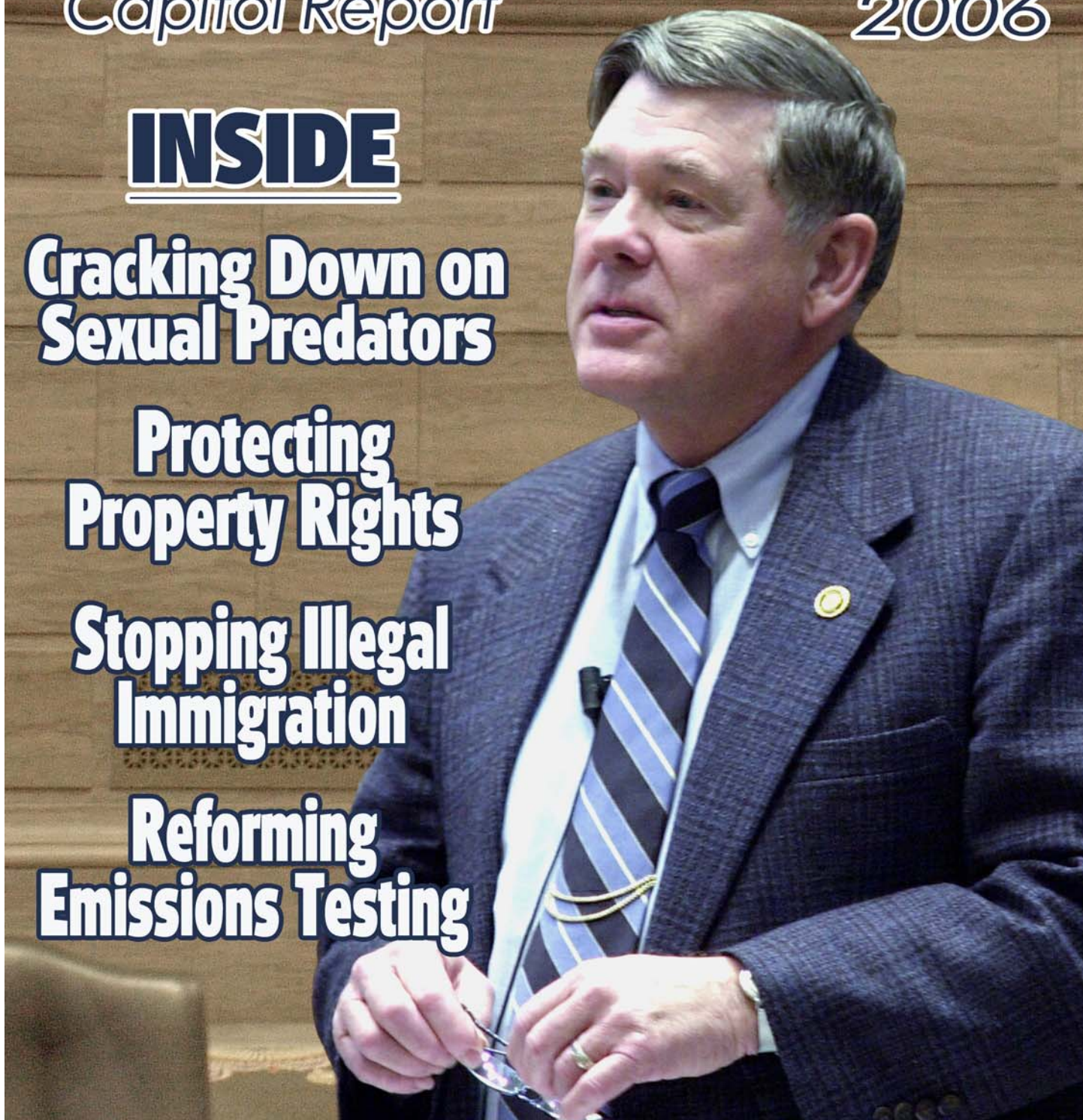
INSIDE

**Cracking Down on
Sexual Predators**

**Protecting
Property Rights**

**Stopping Illegal
Immigration**

**Reforming
Emissions Testing**



From the desk of

STATE SENATOR
Bill Alter

Dear Friends,

2006 was my first full session representing the people of the great 22nd Senate District, and it has been a true honor with many challenges along the way.

This year I succeeded in advancing legislation that my legislative survey indicated was especially important to Jefferson County residents as well as the rest of Missouri:

- **SB 583** decentralizes the federally mandated auto emissions program. The bill has been signed by the governor.
- **SB 753** prohibits sex offenders from entering school property. The language was included in HB 1698.
- **SB 959** relates to eminent domain, and language from this bill was included in the final version of HB 1944.
- **SB 1250** is the only comprehensive legislation introduced effectively dealing with illegal immigration. It passed the Senate on a 29 to 3 vote but ran out of time in the House. I will reintroduce it early next year to ensure its passage.



I hope you enjoy reading about what has been going on in your state government. I remain committed to responding to issues that involve our district and look forward to your input on Missouri legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bill Alter".

Bill Alter

Contact Sen. Alter

Gary Romine and Mary Lois Gerdes work in Sen. Alter's Capitol office.

Each is more than willing to answer any questions or address any concerns you have about state government.

To contact Sen. Alter or his staff, call (573) 751-1492, e-mail bill.alter@senate.mo.gov, stop by Room 429 at the State Capitol in Jefferson City, or check out www.senate.mo.gov/alter.



SEN. ALTER'S COMMITTEES

Aging, Families, Mental
and Public Health



Education



Judiciary and Civil and
Criminal Jurisprudence



Small Business, Insurance and
Industrial Relations

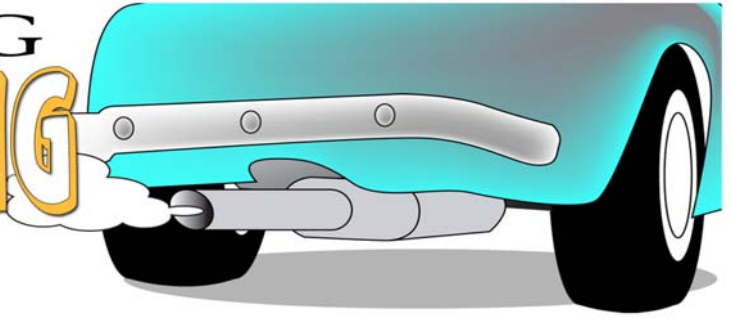


Transportation



Joint Committee on Terrorism,
Bioterrorism and Homeland Security

ELIMINATING EXHAUSTING HASSLES



Since 2000, vehicle owners in the St. Louis area have had to get their vehicles' emissions tested every other year in order to renew their licenses. Although the emissions inspections are good for the environment, they are also a major inconvenience because testing methods are out-of-date, repairs are costly and there are too few places to get a vehicle tested.

Federal law mandates that certain urban zones, such as the metropolitan communities of St. Louis, implement a vehicle emissions-inspection program. Sen. Alter joined with Sen. John Griesheimer in co-sponsoring Senate Bill 583 to make Missouri emissions regulations less of a hassle. The governor's signature enables the changes to take effect in September 2007.

Among its many provisions, SB 583 decentralizes the emissions-inspection program so that consumers will have more places to get their vehicles tested. The measure also modernizes the testing method and defines the procedures that stations must follow to

become certified emissions inspectors. Cars and light-duty pickup trucks and vans with diesel-powered engines will now be subject to inspections, and the fee is capped at \$24.

To cut down on the number of unnecessary inspections, the bill exempts the following:

- New vehicles for four years after their model year, provided the vehicle has fewer than 40,000 miles on the odometer at the biannual safety inspection.
- Motor vehicles driven fewer than 12,000 miles between biennial safety inspections.
- Vehicles manufactured before 1996, though they still must undergo a gas-cap pressure test, which would be included in the vehicle safety inspection.
- Heavy-duty trucks with gross vehicle weight ratings of more than 8,500 pounds.



Bulldozers Be Gone

Protecting the rights of farmers, homeowners and small businesses

Eminent domain laws allow governments to condemn and buy out private property for "public use" as long as just compensation is paid.

The laws were established so that projects such as building government facilities or making improvements to public infrastructure could revitalize struggling areas.

But the U.S. Supreme Court last year ruled that governments can seize private property for economic purposes, such as an increased tax base or more jobs.

Lawmakers believed this interpretation of "public use" to be unfair, unethical and arguably unconstitutional, so they passed House Bill 1944.

The legislation:

- Prohibits eminent domain from being used in projects solely for purposes of economic development.
- Prevents farmland from being designated as "blighted" for eminent domain purposes.
- Ensures that when eminent domain is used for traditional public use, compensation will be based on several factors including: heritage value, fair-market value, willingness of the owner to sell the property and the costs of relocation and replacement.



STANDING UP FOR *American* IDEALS

The Missouri Legislature took significant steps this year to protect the essence of democracy. Two measures aim to strengthen constituents' trust in elected officials and renew their faith in the election process. A notable effort was also made by Sen. Alter and fellow lawmakers to preserve the integrity of U.S. citizenship by cracking down on illegal immigration.

Passed: HB 1900

Bringing accountability and transparency to campaign financing by:

- Allowing the public to see who gives what to whom.
- Prohibiting candidates at the state level from receiving campaign contributions during the legislative session.
- Forbidding lobbyists to pay for out-of-state travel expenses unless they are approved in advance.



Sen. Alter (second from left) discusses legislation with his colleagues on the Senate floor.

Passed: SB 1014

Ensuring that Missouri elections are fair and honest by:

- Requiring that voters provide a photo ID when casting a ballot.
- Exempting those who are over 65, disabled and home-bound, or have religious objections from showing a photo ID.
- Providing a free photo ID to those who cannot afford one.
- Making it a felony to provide false information or use violence at the polls with the intent to prevent someone from voting.

Stalled: SB 1250

Giving local law enforcement tools to crack down on illegal immigration in Missouri.

To address the thousands of illegal immigrants in Missouri, Sen. Alter sponsored SB 1250.

The legislation would have:

- Enabled the Missouri Highway Patrol to receive federal training from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to learn the best ways to enforce federal immigration laws on highways and interstates in Missouri.
- Made a portion of \$5 million in federal money available to Missouri for training costs.
- Given trained state highway patrol members access to the federal database of those who violate their visas.
- Prevented illegal immigrants from receiving any taxpayer-funded assistance ranging from health-care benefits to public education.

SB 1250 made it through the Senate, but the House ran out of time before it was able to advance the measure.

Even though the legislation did not become law, Sen. Alter has succeeded in laying a solid foundation for future efforts to protect the best interests of legal Missouri citizens by clarifying what the state can and cannot do. He plans to bring forth similar legislation in 2007.

Law of Protection

With the passage of HB 1698, the Legislature empowered Missouri to prevent sexual predators from harming Missouri children. The measure includes similar language to legislation sponsored by Sen. Alter.

The main provisions of the bill are:



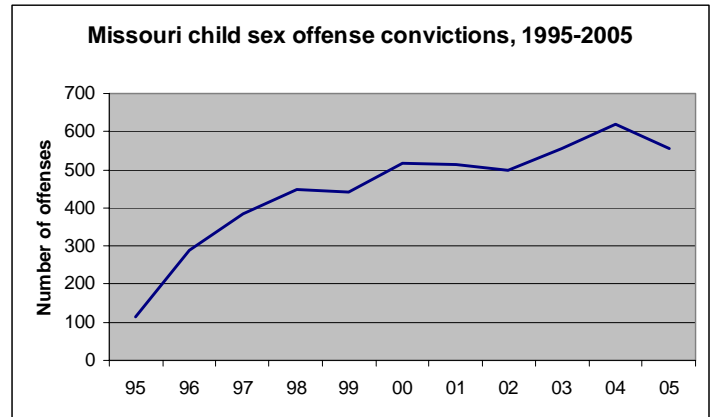
Prison Sentences:

Anyone convicted of forcible rape or sodomy of a child under the age of 12 will be sentenced to life and must serve at least 30 years before they will be considered for parole.



Cyber Crimes Unit:

To track down cyber predators who use the anonymity of the Internet to lure in children, this provision authorizes the creation of a panel to distribute grants to law enforcement task forces to patrol online social networks and chat rooms.



SOURCE: Missouri Department of Corrections



Sexual Assault by a Teacher:

The crime of sexual contact with a student has been expanded to include sexual contact with a student by a student teacher, employee of the school, volunteer of the school or of an organization working with the school, or a person employed by a contractor providing services to the school.



Sexual Trafficking of a Child:

Those found guilty of sexual trafficking of a child younger than 12 years of age will face a felony punishable by life in prison without parole eligibility for 25 years.



Logging On to Innovation

As a member of the Senate Education Committee, Sen. Alter helped advance legislation creating a virtual school, which will be subject to all Missouri public school regulations. The virtual school will not replace public schools or homeschooling, but *will* be a supplemental educational opportunity for students who have difficulty being productive in a traditional classroom, are temporarily

homebound or want to take courses not offered in their school districts.

The virtual school students will use a home computer to access online lessons and interact with teachers and other students. Using the technology of today, virtual school students will be able to learn at their own pace, keep track of their progress and get a quality education. The virtual school will begin operating by July 1, 2007. First-year enrollment will be limited to 500 students.

OTHER 2006 LEGISLATION

1st Amendment Abuse: CURED

A radical Kansas church had been abusing the freedom of speech by protesting at the funerals of U.S. soldiers to spread their message. This insensitive and cruel behavior caused even more pain for the grieving families and friends.

Lawmakers believed that the church members' First Amendment rights ended where the mourners' rights began, so they quickly passed SB 578.

The measure states that funeral protests cannot be held within one hour prior to and one hour after the completion of funerals in Missouri. Because the bill had an emergency clause, the law immediately went into effect upon the official signing in February. Since then, the U.S. Congress has passed a similar ban on protests within 300 feet of the entrance of a national cemetery and within 150 feet of a road into the cemetery from an hour before and an hour after a funeral.



MEDICAID Provider Fraud

As much as \$575 million a year in taxpayer dollars is lost due to fraud committed by Medicaid providers. The most common frauds of this kind are overstating labor and billing multiple times for the same service or for fake prescriptions.

Because provider fraud steals from the taxpayers *and* the poor, the Senate passed a measure with a provision stiffening the penalties for Medicaid providers who defraud the system.

Unfortunately, session ended before both chambers could pass the bill, which also would have banned perpetrators from participating in Medicaid for 10 years.

The Senate did what it could to better protect the system that provides our state's most vulnerable citizens with quality health care. At this writing, there is talk of holding a special session to address this issue.

Getting Pumped for the Future



Lawmakers took a significant step to move Missouri toward a more environmentally sound energy policy and decrease the state's dependency on foreign oil.

HB 1270 requires that most gasoline sold in Missouri contain a 10 percent ethanol blend beginning Jan. 1, 2008. The move toward ethanol is understandable, considering all of the benefits of using the renewable fuel.

The new standard, which will rely heavily on the state's corn crop, will help Missouri farm families, boost the state economy and improve our air quality. Plus, the more ethanol Missouri uses, the less the state will have to rely on costly foreign oil imports.

The Senate also approved a measure establishing the Green Power Initiative under SB 915, but the House did not have time to advance it.

The legislation called on regulated utilities in Missouri to get 3 percent of their electrical energy from renewable sources by 2012, 7 percent by 2015, and 10 percent by 2020. The bill would have helped bring sustainability and responsibility to Missouri's energy supply and keep consumer rates at affordable levels. Sen. Alter expects similar efforts to advance this legislation next year.

PASSED:

For Law Enforcers



Sen. Alter's background in law enforcement led him to advocate for the following two bills, which take effect Aug. 28, 2006.

SB 785 — allows any jailer to serve a warrant to an inmate for a crime separate from that for which he or she is already in custody. Sen. Alter sponsored this measure to make the warrant-issuing process more efficient and cost-effective.

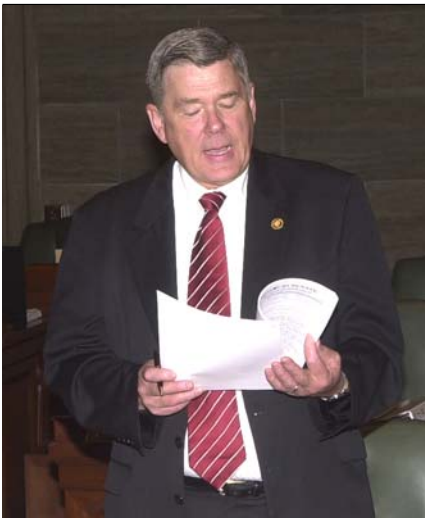
SB 778 — increases safety on Missouri waterways. Sen. Alter co-sponsored the bill because it enables the water patrol to enforce laws on lakes and rivers just as strictly as the highway patrol is able to do on state roads.

Retirement Benefits For All Juvenile Court Employees

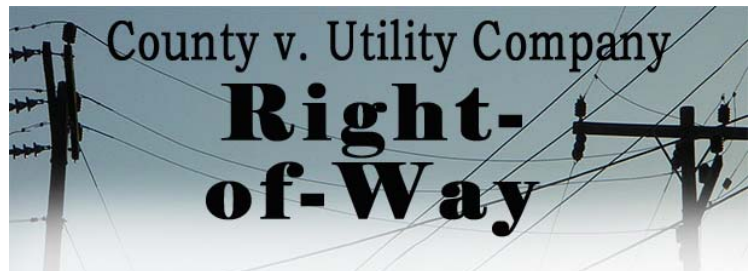
Six Missouri counties, including Jefferson County, have juvenile court employees who are left without retirement benefits. Technically they are employed by the state, but because the county issues their checks, they are not eligible for either Missouri's state employee retirement system (MOSERS) or the county's retirement program.

Sen. Alter thinks these hardworking employees deserve retirement benefits, so he sponsored SB 850, which will provide coverage for them under the county's retirement system.

The bill didn't make it to the Senate floor for debate, but Sen. Alter hopes to reintroduce it next year.



*Sen. Alter
introduces
important
legislation
on the Senate
floor.*



Residents rely on county government to make decisions about infrastructure improvements based on their best interests. But when a utility company's power lines or pipes stand in the way of progress, the utility's potential unwillingness to cooperate becomes an obstacle.

Sen. Alter sponsored SB 1102 to enable Jefferson County to adopt ordinances encouraging utilities to act in a timely manner when the location of their infrastructure (power lines, poles, pipes, etc.) along county streets, highways or roads impedes the progress of local construction projects.

Jefferson County should have control over major projects, such as drainage-system modifications.

Sen. Alter also believes that the community's needs should come before the utility companies' concerns for their own convenience.

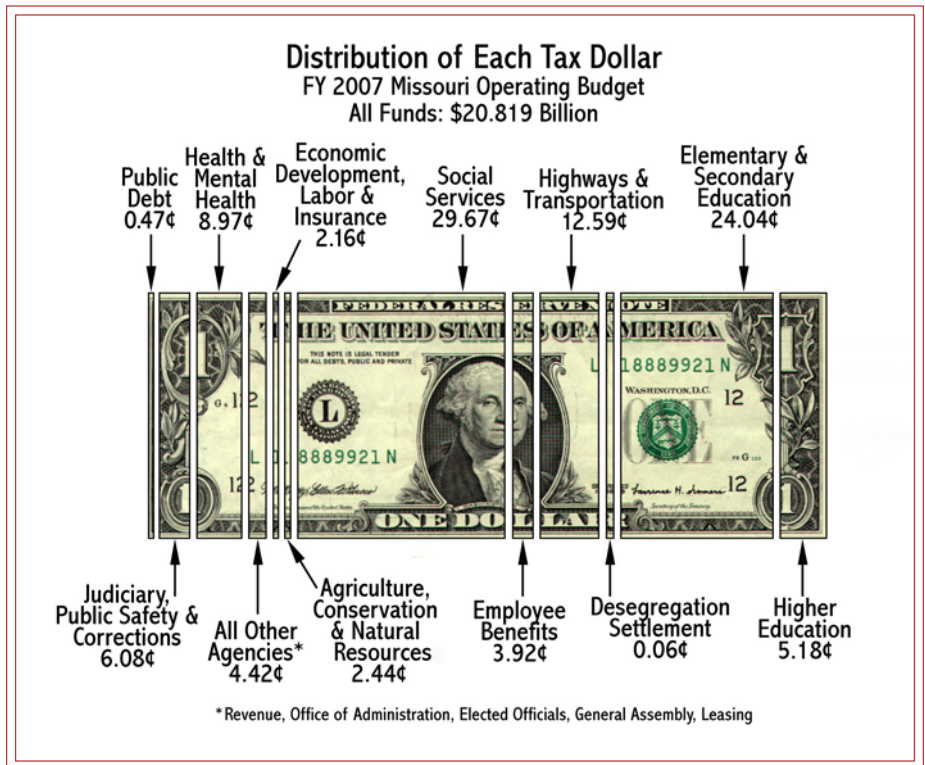
State lawmakers adjourned for the year before the measure could be approved by both chambers, but Sen. Alter plans to revisit the issue next year.

\$\$ MO MONEY \$\$

Each year, the General Assembly must determine how to budget taxpayer money for the next fiscal year. This session, the Legislature passed a \$20.8 billion spending plan reflecting responsible financial planning.

The 2007 Fiscal Year Budget allots:

- Nearly \$130 million to school districts in Jefferson County.
- A 2 percent increase for state colleges and universities, including nearly \$8 million for Jefferson College.
- A \$400 million increase for construction and maintenance of roads and bridges.
- \$6.2 billion for the Dept. of Social Services — 4 percent more than last year.
- A \$200 million increase for Medicaid.
- A 4 percent pay raise for state employees, except elected officials.



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